

The 1872 origin of the 1919 incident

-A. S. Panesar

The overwhelming and strange support that the imperial Government got from Sikh nobility-clergy after Kooka massacre in 1872 was a welcome sign for the imperialists. Soon they became accustomed to this 'support blanket'. The same classes gave full support to Dyer after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919. But preventing an awakening of the masses against the imperial rule required more effort, and a part of priesthood faithfully provided the needed services.

Vigorous defense of the heinous act:

As mentioned in the previous issue under the same title, the heinous act of Cowan was strongly criticized even by Britishers, most notably of them being the editor of THE FRIEND OF INDIA, James Routledge. However, arguments were also put in favour of Cowan, against the reasoning forwarded by Routledge. The most potent argument was that India needed to be ruled and governed according to her own customs. The fact that Punjab nobility and clergy supported the Kooka executions was also put forward a lot of times. In fact, the leniency, rather support of the aristocracy and clergy in the case of Kooka massacre, encouraged the imperialists to make such an argument. Ridiculing this, THE FRIEND OF INDIA remarked that they had no patience to hear such arguments because 'Right and Wrong are not different in India and England'. The newspaper expressed frustration at the level of arguments being made and the sheer disregard shown to Indian sentiments.

A column in THE FRIEND OF INDIA further made sarcastic comments on the arguments being raised by the imperial Government and which must have been encouraged by the 'blessing of the priesthood' that they easily received:

'We would suppose it altogether absurd for us to even think of still less mention, the fact that 66 men represent a good many families. That, of course, is all nonsense. Who cares about a Punjab family! No, we shall not mention that subject – it would be 'sentiment' you know, and sentiment will never do in India. We dare say that the wives and children of the men executed rather enjoyed the thing, and will remember it with gratitude till they, too, are blown away from guns in some future time. Who cares! Well, there is one thing we hope. We sincerely hope that the majesty of England will be vindicated in this matter. We hope that there will be such a decision put on record that it will endure into far off times and be the heirloom of a wiser, happier and more contented people than we know anything of at present in India'.

However, the situation in Punjab was altogether different. In Patiala, orders were passed to confiscate the property of every person involved in the Malerkotla incident. Not only this, orders were passed to arrest every single Namdhari Sikh who went to visit Sri Bhaini Sahib. Such an exemplary flattery of the imperial cause by the colonized was the one of its own kind!

With the continuous protest by THE FRIEND OF INDIA newspaper, the imperial Government was forced to make an inquiry. THE FRIEND OF INDIA was not aware of the harsh conditions that had been imposed on all Namdhari Sikhs. Had they known it, they would have written at length about it

also, even when in Punjab 'no single voice or line' could be afforded. Conversely, had THE FRIEND OF INDIA not shown its orientation for justice, Cowan and Forsyth had been promoted and given higher powers!

THE FRIEND OF INDIA newspaper sincerely believed in the importance of justice. But probably due to representations from Punjab, the imperial Government was not under much genuine pressure and wanted to dilute the matter 'under the table'. THE HINDOO PARTIOT had already mentioned that it was strange that in Punjab, 'not a voice has been raised or a line written' against the dreadful deed'. Expressing grief over the situation, the newspaper stated:

'For if we cannot show that under our life is more precious and justice more certain we have very little to place us above the worst conquerors that India will have. Executive power and ability will not compensate for a departure from the rules of justice and moderation which it is the pride of all good governments to make the foundation stone of their rule. The Indian Government will at periods fail to make full and searching enquiry into this Military Execution'.

The observation that '(imperial) Government will at periods fail to make full and searching enquiry' revealed the double-standards of the empire, which already stood exposed when the Namdhari Sikhs were forced to rebel. Identical to this, even fifty seven years after the Kooka massacre in 1872, Shaheed Bhagat Singh also had to restore to bombing of Parliament for making the deaf (imperial Government) hear (the concern of the people it forcibly governed). The conduct of Cowan, the 'iron fist' of imperial Government for Namdhari Sikhs without addressing their concern and the 'soft corner' for Cowan, despite his crime, re-exposed the enigma of the empire. However, as the whole episode snow-balled and wherever its news reached, it resulted in opposition to the action undertaken, except of course, in Punjab!

THE FRIEND OF INDIA still kept pushing its point:

'Nothing known or conceivable could justify the more than Chinese brutality of the misguided officers who perpetrated these massacres'.

'It is sufficiently deplorable that British officers should have perpetrated such inexcusable butcheries'.

'The whole thing, the deed itself, its reception by Indian society, its treatment by a section of the Indian press, and, I must add, the ominous silence of Government in regard to it, is deplorable in the last degree, and reveals a degraded standard of education and morality which it is deeply painful to contemplate'.

When the imperial Government finally came under intense symbolic pressure, in spite of the loyal assurances and allegiance of the Punjab nobility and clergy, some sort of punishment now had to be given to Cowan. As THE FRIEND OF INDIA newspaper expressed 'there is no defence at all (for Cowan)', reasoning failed to justify Cowan and Forsyth. Cowan was suspended and Forsyth transferred after demotion.

This whole episode shows that like THE FRIEND OF INDIA, if priesthood had also stood against the imperial Government, much more could have been achieved. THE FRIEND OF INDIA stood in opposition to Cowan despite the loyalty of Punjab clergy. Had there been even symbolic gestures of protest by priesthood and the common populace, much more stronger the case had been for THE

FRIEND OF INDIA and other well-wishers of India, one of which was the Bengali newspaper AMRITA BAZAR PATIRKA. The case could have been utilized by priesthood for banning kine-killing in Punjab and achieving good-will for the people that it represented. Gestures of disapproval from Punjab would have easily exerted international pressure on the imperial policies, in view of the contemporary ideological battle between the imperial Britain and socialist Russia, both of which wanted to show the applicability of their model over the other. But the golden opportunity was lost, largely by the apathy of clergy and society, which is expressed in THE FRIEND OF INDIA statement of despair regarding the 'reception of the execution by Indian society', which chose to remain aloof from it. This also testifies the observation of 'degraded standard of education and morality' made by the newspaper.

Cowan was suspended and THE FRIEND OF INDIA expressed satisfaction over it:

'We are glad to see that Mr. Cowan has been suspended'.

Unparalleled flattery of the imperial cause:

Things practically stopped here, and in all probability, the next sequence of events remained unknown to THE FRIEND OF INDIA. Those sequence of events exemplified the loyalty that Punjab aristocracy and clergy had to the imperial cause.

Following are the representations from Punjab, not for gaining a respectable position in the empire setup or trying to understand the reasons of revolt and discussing the dissent of people, but to request the imperial Government to "not suspend Cowan". The names of the nobles begging the imperial Government have not been given. A few representations forwarded were as follows:

'In May last a meeting of several Native gentlemen of this place and elsewhere was held here, and Sirdar Bikram Singh, Bahadur, Ahluwalia, was called to the chair. The object of the meeting was to memorialize the Government of India to reconsider its late orders removing Mr. T.D. Forsyth, late Commissioner and Superintendent, Ambala, from Oudh had taken in the execution of Kukas at Kotla in January last'.

'We, the subjects of Her Majesty the Queen, most respectfully beg to appeal..., against an order recently passed by the Government of India, whereby Mr. Cowan has been dismissed from the service...'.

'...unanimously came to the conclusion that the Government orderes passed in that case require reconsideration, and that consequently it was necessary to make a representation to the Government on the subject; for we understand the affairs of the country far better than any other class'.

Clearly the nobility-clergy was justifying the action undertaken by Cowan by asserting that the sort of punishment was apt for the Indians! When THE FRIEND OF INDIA was confronted with similar arguments from English press earlier, they had replied:

A great deal has been said about the peculiarity of India, and especially of the Punjab. We have scarcely patience to read such arguments. Right and wrong are the same in India as in England.

But for the Punjabi representation, right and wrong were different in India and England, especially in Punjab. Punjab nobility and clergy belittled itself, downgraded its own position and created the conditions optimal for the 'imperial rule'.

At this point, in his observation, historian Thomas Metcalf makes a prediction in the retrograde. Metcalf says, 'their vigorous defence of their actions marked out a path that was to lead in 1919 to the infamous Amritsar massacre'.

The officers, Cowan and Forsyth were vigorously defended by the imperial Government, but not as vigorously as defended by the Punjab nobility and clergy. It would a matter of historical research to determine if the Punjabi population could have censored priesthood at that time and protested against them for their support to Cowan. May be, the common population could not have done that. During the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the priesthood itself had successfully and positively censored the Maharaja himself. But had the new priesthood been censored at the time of Kooka executions, the reputation of Punjab's common people would have raised and Jallianwala Bagh tragedy averted!

But nothing of that sort happened. The imperial administrators nevertheless thanked the priesthood and nobility for their whole-hearted support. The romance of a section of society continued to greater heights with the imperial Government. Progressive things also happened meanwhile. The 1872 incident indirectly paved way for a greater level of consciousness amongst Sikhs. Singh Sabha Amritsar was formed and they did hard work to prevent public conversion of four Sikh youths to Christianity in Amritsar. Although the Namdhari Sikhs suffered on all fronts, yet the incident raised eyebrows all around and the enigma of the empire came into light. With Singh Sabha Amritsar, the imperialists hoped to regain the sympathy. However, upon realizing that Singh Sabha Amritsar was acting as an independent unit, circumstances were manipulated in such a way that another organization, Singh Sabha Lahore came into being. This entity took the relations with British imperialism to a newer level. The British Government officials could become part of this organization, whose rules dictated that the organization would not say or do anything that could potentially be against the imperial Government interests.

Government control of the Sikh shrines:

The advantage of the 'support blanket provided by Sikh priesthood' is expressed in the words of a British officer himself. In order to reduce the Government interference in religious affairs, the British Government had to pass the Government Endowments Act XX of 1863. But giving the example of Kooka outbreak, the imperial administrators argued that due to control of Durbar Sahib in the hands of Government, the Kooka outbreak did not assume the character of a mass movement.

The comments on an official file 'Management of the Durbar Sahib the principal Sikh Temple at Amritsar were recorded as follows:

'I think the Government of India will fully accept the view that, under the circumstances of the Durbar Sahib and of the Sikh faith and nation, the Government cannot resign all control or influence over the shrine, and cannot under Act XX of 1863 safely or useful leave the shrine and its affairs to the indirect control of the civil courts. Kuka troubles might have taken a different complexion if the Amritsar shrine had been the centre of Kukaism. The Sikhs are always liable to waves of religious reform or enthusiasm. Religious feeling among them readily blends with political excitement. And the Government can best keep control over such movements by'

retaining its influence over the Durbar Sahib. It would be the height of political imprudence to surrender this useful power in consequence of a single decision of a subordinate court, or in obedience to the English religious feeling of which Act XX of 1863 (for enabling the Government to divest itself of the management of religious endowments) was the outcome'.

First of all, the above comments demonstrate the imperial double standards, when it rebuked its own law, in this case, Government Endowments Act XX (1863) with regard to Durbar Sahib. More importantly, the comments reveal a 'useful power' that the imperial British had in their hands, due to which 'Government can keep best control'. Giving up this one 'useful power' was described as 'the height of political imprudence' as this power, the power to manipulate Sikh masses using the affairs at Durbar Sahib, was the lifeline on which British rule in Punjab and by extrapolation, to India depended. Since it was Punjab which not only provided tax revenues, but most importantly, the army for the empire.

Richard Fox, in his word 'Lions of Punjab', expresses the imperial strategy aptly:

'After annexing the Punjab, British administration developed two separate methods of bringing their former opponents, the Singhs, to heel. One method aimed at securing the loyalty of Sikh temple functionaries to British rule; the other hoped to recruit a cheap but dependable and above all, obedient soldiery for the Raj by promoting Sikhism as a separate religion and Singh as a separate social identity based in that religion'.

Hence, the 'temple functionaries' or 'priesthood' was the main instrument which along with, another section comprising of authors, historians fulfilled both the British strategies mentioned above. The National Archives of United Kingdom mentions a catalogue reference number CN 4/8/35 under the title 'Sikh raw recruits, 1933-35'. It reads: 'It would have been men similar to those shown in this photograph who would have been recruited into the army to help fight the First World War. In the Punjab no more than 5% of the population could read and among the rural communities the number was even lower. The British recruited heavily from the least educated urban population from the Punjab as these people were regarded as loyal and less likely to be attracted by political ideas. Thus, the few modifications at the top hierarchy of 'temple functionaries' had widespread and definite effects for Punjab and the empire.

With the common populace falling into the trap set up by imperial administrators, the romance of majority of Sikh functionaries with the empire went on. The imperial administration did not leave the control of Golden Temple. While the Namdhari Sikhs remained opposed to the imperial British empire, the loyalty to British imperialism was cultivated amongst all those who came under the 'umbrella' of priesthood including its new organization, primarily Lahore-based Sikh revival societies.

The flattery continued:

Raj Pal Singh, author of the book 'The Sikhs: Their journey of Five Hundred Years' mentions:

The Singh Sabha was totally loyal to the British. The message of farewell sent to Lord Ripon by the Sri Guru Singh Sabha by Man Singh, President of the Golden Temple Committee read as follows: "Our bodies are the exclusive possession of the British. Moreover, that we are solemnly and religiously bound to serve Her Majesty; that in discharging this duty we act according to the

wishes of our Great Guru, the ever living God and that whenever and wherever need be felt for us, we wish to be the foremost of all Her Majesty's subjects, to move and uphold and honour of the crown; that we reckon ourselves as the favourite sons of our Empress mother, although living far distant from Her Majesty's feet and that we regard the people of England as our kindred brethren". The British full reciprocated Sikh sentiments as revealed in the words spoken at a function held at Patiala by the Viceroy. He said: "With this movement (the Singh Sabha Movement) the Government of India is in heart sympathy. We appreciate the many admirable qualities of the Sikh nation, and it is a pleasure to us to know that, while in days gone by we recognized in them a gallant and formidable foe, we are today able to give them a foremost place amongst the true and loyal subjects of Her Majesty, the Queen Empress".

This went on. John Gordon mentions many instances which are identical to the expression 'we are solemnly and religiously bound to serve Her Majesty', used by the Singh Sabha Lahore. He mentions delightfully that Prince Albert Victor of Wales described Punjab as 'the soldier's land', further stating, 'There is no province in India that can boast, as the Punjab can, that it is the bulwark of defence against foreign aggression, or that can be termed with the same significance the guard-room of the Eastern Empire'. Gordon further depicts the details of procession in Seesganj Gurudwara, Delhi to celebrate coronation of King Edward VII in 1903. He says:

'A small temple in the chief street of Delhi marks the site of (Guru) Tegh Bahadur's execution in 1675. A procession in all the panoply and pageantry of old feudal Sikh days proceeded to this spot. It was formed of horsemen, banner-bearers, and the Sikh levies accompanying their chiefs, being followed by a carriage in which under a covering of gold was the sacred 'Granth', the holy book. This was reverently lifted out and conveyed into the shrine, whilst to mark the special importance of the occasion the English national anthem, "God save the King!" was played by the musicians. All the Sikh chiefs, sardars, and church dignitaries were there. It was a gathering of the nation, called together by their own leaders, and all knew what they were there for. Standing by the holy book, they, on behalf of all the Sikhs, with their martyred Guru present in spirit (they all believed that), renewed in each other's presence their vows of fealty to the King-Emperor. A sacred chant was then sung in which all joined, closing with their invocation to the Supreme Being, which was responded to by the loud shouts of the crowd. On the sacred 'Granth' being replaced in the carriage, "God save the King!" was again played, to emphasise the meaning of the ceremony which typified their loyal and sacred bond to British rule and the compelling force of the union which, according to their ideas, had been miraculously brought about. This striking incident is a significant proof of Sikh veneration and affection for the British crown, the effect of which doubtless has been widespread'.

The story of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's martyrdom as 'retold' and as depicted by the Gordon is not provided here. However, the concocted story as referred in the Gordon's account is another example of how far the 'temple functionaries' could go in preaching 'loyalty to the British crown'. The account of how Raja of Nabha professed his loyalty and by paying personal homage to his sovereign (King Edward VII) he believed to have fulfilled the third duty of a true Sikh, is also delightfully mentioned by Gordon.

With the flattery of kind mentioned above, it is no surprise that this particular class strengthened the roots of imperialism as well as ensuring its continuance. In 1897, the imperial British authorities were in all praise for the valiant Sikhs for their action in Battle of Saragarhi. But for them, the 'Sikh', the 'Lion' was only one who unquestionably supported the British imperialism. With their repeated vows of 'sincere loyalty to the British crown', the same can be said for majority of the Sikh priesthood also.

Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the repetition of history:

After the Kooka revolt, the Sikh soldiers were not kept in Ludhiana fort (due to fear that other Sikh soldiers may sympathize with the Kuka Sikhs). But now, about half-a-century later, the imperial rulers were so sure about the loyalty of the Sikhs that for killing the people assembled at Jallianwala Bagh on the morning of 13th April hundred years ago, Reginald Dyer had no second thoughts on bringing with him Sikh soldiers also.

The amount of torture inflicted on people even after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy is beyond description. The accounts of such mental and physical torture given in books shake one thoroughly. The imperial Government resorted to bombing through aeroplanes, killing people by using machine guns even after the Jallianwala tragedy. Flagging of innocents including women, torture on students, soldiers easing themselves in public wells so that people could not use their waters, are only a very few amongst them. This shook people everywhere. Tagore returned his knighthood and became a strong critic of the Government. The enigma of empire, first shown by the Namdhari Sikhs, half-a-century ago, now stood openly exposed. Yet all of the insult and assault had no effect on the loyalists of British Raj. Some of them came out in open support of Dyer. The reader's attention is again drawn to the attitude of nobility and clergy in the aftermath of Kooka outbreak. The same history repeated itself here also!. Nigel Colett mentions this repetition of history in his book 'The Butcher of Amritsar: Gerneal Reginald Dyer'. He says:

'The Sikh leaders shamelessly flattered and humoured Dyer. At a ceremony sometime in late April, both he and Briggs were invited to the Golden Temple for the almost unheard of honour of being made honorary Sikhs. Annie later related what her husband told her of this ceremony (an account confirmed by the recollections of the Sikhs who were there at the time):

'Sahib', they said, 'you must become a Sikh even as Nikalseyn Sahib became a Sikh'. The General thanked them for the honour, but he objected that he could not as a British officer let his hair grow long. Arur Singh laughed. 'We will let you off the long hair', he said. General Dyer offered another objection, 'But I cannot give up smoking'. 'That you must do'. Said Arur Singh. 'No', said the General, 'I am very sorry, but I cannot give up smoking'. The priest conceded, 'We will let you give it up gradually'. 'That I promise you', said the General, 'at the rate of one cigarette a year'.

Dyer and Briggs were presented with symbols of the Sikh faith, including the turban and kirpan, and were given a siropa. The sarbrah thanked them for their protection of the Temple. A few days later, as Dyer left Amritsar, bound for the Afghan War, the leading Sikhs of the city came to him to offer him ten thousand men to fight the Afghans, an offer he relayed to the Government but which was declined. There is evidence that a shrine was dedicated in his honour at the temple of Guru Sat Sultani'.

This is how a priesthood responded. The offer of 'ten thousand men' also indicates the influence that the nobility-clergy had and also provides a glance to how Punjab turned 'loyal' to British Empire. The ethics of this loyalty is self-evident from the fact that the 'imperialized ones' now did not hesitate to kill their own countrymen and women, and in whole-heartedly supporting those who did that.

Colett also states:

'Arur Singh, manager of the Golden Temple, along with seven other principal Sikh shrine managers, circulated a notice in early May that no aeroplane had touched the Temple, that no machine gun has been planted in it, and no bombs had been dropped upon it'.

But what about Punjab, which was burning? The above priesthood had no concerns for it. Colett further states: 'It was mutually advantageous, both to Dyer and to those then in power in the Sikh community in Amritsar, to make use of each other'.

Thus, like the vigorous support provided to Cowan and Forsyth after the Kooka massacre, after the Amritsar massacre also, vigorous support was provided to Dyer and O'Dwyer by the above-mentioned priesthood.

The effect that the 'support of priesthood to imperial Government' had on local populace is made evident by the following account:

'On his second expedition into the Sikh rural areas, Dyer took with him a senior Sikh priest, Mahant Siri Kirpa Singh of the important Guru Sat Sultani shrine. Irving went along again, and this time Dyer took even more troops. Two hundred and fifty infantry (again including a company of the Londons), twenty cavalry, some field guns and the armoured cars. They held a large darbar at the village of Raja Sansee, and there the mahant spoke to good effect to dispel rumours about the Temple. Then they marched on to China Bugga, held a meeting there in the afternoon and camped around Canal Bungalow for the night. On the next day, the column went on to Atari, Dyer, escorted by the cavalry and an armoured car, visiting the mission at Ashrapur on the way. They held another large meeting in the evening, and the column camped for the night around the Public Works Department rest house. A British officer present with the column recorded his impression of what was happening, and was witness to some of the meetings that Dyer had with his old Sikh officers and men as the column progressed through the countryside:

These old Sikh officers, in uniforms of bygone days, coming out of the villages to pay their respects to the General. With the help of the Indian officers whom they knew, and seeing their high priest with the column, the villagers soon began to realize they were being used or were meant to be tools in the hands of enemies of the Crown'.

The above clearly demonstrates how the continuous support to imperial Government by priesthood prevented an awakening among the common population. It is sad to note that not only the vigorous defence of Cowan and Forsyth in the past paved a way for the unfortunate Amritsar incident as noted by Metcalf, but even after the incident, a part of priesthood kept supporting the imperial Government and re-making the 'bonds of loyalty' with it.

Hence, the history that repeated, did not owe only to the 'vulnerable' psychology of Anglo-Indians, but to the 'anti-ethical' conduct of a part of priesthood as well. Meanwhile, the grandson of Arur

Singh, posed a public apology for the actions of his grandfather. During argumentation in the Kooka massacre, THE FRIEND OF INDIA newspaper had displayed their ethics when they said: 'The grain that we destroy we can restore at little cost, but the lives we destroy we cannot restore!'. Such ethics were missing from the 'imperialized' priesthood, just like the imperial Government.

Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji, while commenting on the reason why Namdhari history is unknown to majority, said in one of his discourses: '**Because the historians distanced themselves from the tradition of Guru Nanak, hence the Namdhari history remained unknown to most**'. The path of equality and justice is the path of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. By endorsing the imperial Government for their atrocities on Namdhari Sikhs particularly, a confidence was created among the imperial administrators that they would be supported by nobility-clergy in whatever course they undertake. The Kooka massacre provided an opportunity whereby good diplomacy could have won international attention for Punjab and India. While the conduct of Namdhari Sikhs kept inspiring later generations for independence, the golden opportunity to foster mass rebellion against the imperial Government in 1872 was lost. Similarly, a golden opportunity of unification was provided by the Amritsar massacre. However, the fight of ideals lost this opportunity as well. Nationalist leaders could have displayed mature diplomacy then also, but necessary gains could not be made. Gurmit Singh mentions the poor diplomacy in his book 'Gandhi and the Sikhs'. Few years after the Amritsar massacre, however, a reshuffling of the temple management took place with the Gurudwara Reform Movement. Sikhs displayed exemplary account of protest and removed the corrupt Mahants. Did the reshuffling of temple management translate to efforts for freedom also or not is for history to investigate. If it didn't, what role the newly established priesthood had in it, is also an open question in history.

Relevance in the present:

An apology has been offered from the kin of a priest who endorsed Dyer. An apology is being strongly sought from the British Parliament for the infamous Amritsar massacre. But the Kooka massacre is unknown to most people. The event that first brought the reality of imperial Government and colonial justice to light is largely ignored. The movement that made practical attempts for a free India by trying international focus on the Indian affairs has not been given its due regard. '**Injustice done to one's past will result in a confused future only**', for if sufficient justice cannot be done to events in the past, there will be no direction for happenings in the present leading to future.

The primary sources given in the article reveal that the failure to timely censure the priesthood resulted in their success in shifting the tides in favour of imperialism. A part of priesthood gained opportunistically, but at the cost of degradation of Indian resources and heavy suffering of the Indian people. Learning from the mistakes of past, it is important to follow the path shown by Guru Nanak Dev Ji and other Gurus in the spirit as it has been told by the Gurus, rather than as interpreted and told by others. The priesthood is expected of propagating that path forward, rather than supporting the illegitimate cause of imperialism. This has equal relevance today as it had in the past.

Michael O'Dwyer, the villain who was shot by Shaheed Udham Singh, wrote in the book 'India As I Knew It: 1885-1925' about the then prevailing circumstances:

'The Sikh, though slow-witted, has natural shrewdness as well as a proud tradition of comradeship in arms with the British. Once he is reassured, as he is now being, that the British Government has no designs on his religion, of which indeed it has through the agency of the Indian Army been the chief mainstay, and that it will see that his nationality is not submerged by an artificial constitutional system, he will gladly return to his natural allegiance'.

Worth considering in the above, is the expression: 'Once he is reassured, as is now being'. This informs that the efforts to reconcile and re-affirm the Sikh loyalty in British crown were being done at the time O'Dwyer was writing his book. Clearly, even after removal of Mahants and their replacement by new priesthood, the old system of support to imperial Government was still continuing in some subtle way by one or other agencies.

What is more important to note is the arguments forwarded by a certain separatist movement that is trying to gain hold in Punjab. The fear being spread by that separatist movement is similar to one as has been proposed by the senior of the Butcher of Amritsar - Michael O'Dwyer, as mentioned above. This brings us to an important question where it is pertinent to ask:

Is the history repeating itself again?

Whether common population could have checked the authority of priesthood and blocked their support to imperial Government after 1872 and 1919 is a question of history. But, under the secular constitution of a free India today, it is the responsibility of common people to prevent any organization or institution from using them as tools for propagating a mean political propaganda. The reality of all such organizations who play double standards, by outwardly acting as representative of people and inwardly conspiring for their petty benefits, lays exposed when we consider the twin events of Kooka massacre of 1871 and Amritsar massacre of 1919. It is every citizen's duty to work for the national integrity and unity of the country. It is important to do justice to one's past, respect the people who sacrificed their lives for the cause of their country, shun those who misused popular sentiment and befooled people, learn from the mistakes and work for a better future. Failure to do so in 1872 and afterwards led to 1919. Failure again to realize the mistakes and continuance to strengthen imperialism led to further suffering as partition in 1947. Failures to vet authoritarian organizations after obtaining freedom have led to disturbances in the free India also. History and its unbiased documentation has the ability to provide information of the results of past deeds. This information can help in determine the future course of action. Two things are important, however: First is the Ethics, whereby one undertakes to use the knowledge to serve the humankind, as instructed by the Sikh Gurus. Second is the Truth, whereby historiography and everything else is documented or performed in an unbiased way, again an instruction of the Gurus. Failure of either one can bring disastrous results, as witnessed in the Amritsar massacre of 1919.

It will be informative to note again the way certain Englishmen protested against the colonial injustice. When Cowan was suspended, representations came from Punjab in his favour as mentioned earlier. They were motivated by selfish interests. In England, voices rose in defence of Cowan, motivated by the desire to keep exploiting the most valuable possession of the British

Crown. A noted Christian Donald McLeod wrote in favour of Cowan in newspaper. To this ongoing debate, a British Officer named A.T. Cunynghame responded in the following words:

'The Home News wonders what THE FRIEND OF INDIA will say 'when so good a Christian as Sir Donald McLeod has proclaimed a conviction that the sentence passed on Messrs. Cowan and Forsyth is all things considered a blunder; if nothing worse'. Why, what we say is that of Sir Donald McLeod's Christianity we know nothing, and care nothing, as far as the Kuka Executions are concerned, for it has nothing whatever to do with the matter - save in this, that we know what Christianity teaches, and, if Sir Donald McLeod preaches any other Gospel, we shall have none of it, be his character for Christianity and humanity what it may. And that he does teach such a Gospel we are prepared to prove.'

The writer outrightly rejected his co-religionist, a respected Christian and chose to follow Christianity in its true spirit, rather than a misguided Christian, no matter howsoever respected he was!

'And this is from much belauded Sir Donald McLeod! Well, if this were in accordance with Christianity we should have no thought but that the Gospel would soon be cast aside as an effect thing. If this were English statesmanship, and not the pedantry of Cliqueism, in politics and in religion, we should have no hope for such a mongrel statesmanship in the face of the intellect of civilized nations. We do not hesitate to say that if this teaching of the late Lieutenant Governer of Punjab was carried into practice, human life would be unsafe as ever it was in the worst periods of history'.

'We shall watch curiously the development of this principle; for if it is Christianity, then Christianity is very different thing from what it was in earlier days. If there is truth in the Gospel of Christ, it is a Gospel for all races and nations from the rising to the setting of the sun. And when Sir Donald McLeod tells us that an English officer should be supported right or wrong, we do not say that Sir Donald McLeod is not a Christian (a man must stand for fall by his light), but we say that what he puts forward is not Christianity nor anything like it, anything at all akin to it, as it ever was understood by any of the great masters of Christian thought and deed since Christianity had a name'.

Had the Sikh intelligentsia and priesthood acted according to the principles shown by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, Guru Gobind Singh Ji; they would have never supported the oppressor and shunned the oppressed. Finally, the writer put a strong piece of advice for the natives, when he said:

'The natives of India have a rare spectacle put before them at the present time, and we hope they will attend to it, and give it a voice that will tell in times to come'.

Had the Sikh intelligentsia or priesthood stood against the colonial injustice done at Malerkotla in 1872, rather than having shamelessly endorsed it, in all probability, Dyer and O'Dwyer would not have gained courage for their infamous action in Jallianwala Bagh one hundred years ago.